



*Resumption of Public Liturgies in  
the Time of Public Health Concern  
Sunday/Weekday Mass  
Directives and Guidelines for the  
Diocese of Youngstown ~ May 2020*

In light of the decision to resume the celebration of public Masses and liturgies by the Bishops of Ohio, the following Directives and Guidelines are issued for all parishes of the Diocese of Youngstown. These take into consideration how to best proceed under these unusual circumstances while remaining pastorally sensitive to the People of God and adhering to restrictions issued by the State of Ohio. The guidance provided aims to clarify how such spiritual care can be responsibly offered to the faithful during this period and have been formulated with great care to preserve and respect the powerful liturgical and sacramental symbolism of the rites of the Mass. These directives/guidelines currently remain in effect by order of Bishop Murry and will be revised or changed should any further directives be issued by the Governor of Ohio, the Bishops of Ohio, or Bishop Murry. They are considered to be temporary until it is determined safe to return to the normal circumstances.

**DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND SUNDAY MASS**

The Catholic faithful who reside in the Diocese of Youngstown and all other Catholics in the diocese and especially those who are sick, or at high risk of becoming sick continue to be dispensed from their Sunday obligation until further notice. The Easter Duty obligation is extended for a period of one year from the end of the Easter Season 2020.

➤ **General Guidelines**

1. Understanding the desire of many to return to church, it remains important for those who are at greater risk to refrain from returning until such time they feel comfortable and confident to do so.
2. Those who are symptomatic or who have been exposed to another with the virus within 14 days should not attend Mass in accordance with national, state and local health directives.

3. Parishes are encouraged to continue to live-stream Mass so that those unable to attend may maintain a spiritual connection with their local parish.
4. Appropriate cleaning of high use areas within the church is to be done before and after each service.
5. Every effort to ensure appropriate physical distancing before, during, and after liturgical celebrations is required. Methods will vary depending on capacity and arrangement of church buildings. Parishes will decide how best to configure seating to maintain proper physical distance.
6. Cry Rooms or enclosed spaces for families with small children are not available.
7. Large gatherings before or after Mass are to be discouraged. No receptions or social gatherings (*i.e. coffee/donuts*) are to be held.
8. While not mandatory, those attending Mass may wear masks or face coverings.
9. The amount of people able to be in restrooms at the same time will be posted.
10. If possible, sanitizer should be made available at all entrances.
11. Bulletins and other materials should be available for pick-up. Hospitality ministers (*ushers*) should not pass them out.
12. All in attendance should wash their hands before and after Mass being mindful not to touch their face, eyes, or nose.
13. All in attendance should make every effort to continually model and encourage good hygienic practices.

➤ **During Mass**

Holy Water

- Holy water fonts are to remain empty until further notice.

Hymnals/Missalettes

- All hymnals/missalettes are to be removed and stored for the time being. At each Mass, disposable worship aids should be distributed and then discarded.

Offertory Collection

- The practice of passing baskets throughout the assembly is temporarily suspended. Some options are to use traditional long-handled baskets or to place stationary baskets at the entrances of the church for worshippers to drop their offering at the beginning of Mass.

The Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace

- Physical contact during the Lord's Prayer (*holding hands*) and the Sign of Peace is suspended. For the Sign of Peace those present are encouraged to bow to others and offer words of peace.

Receiving Holy Communion:

- It is highly encouraged and strongly recommended that the reception of Holy Communion be given in the hand. While reception of Holy Communion on the tongue cannot be prohibited it is discouraged at this time.

*Distribution of Holy Communion on the Tongue*

- Out of pastoral necessity and urgency, those desiring to receive Holy Communion on the tongue are permitted to do so. In this instance, they are to be last in line and receive only from the priest. In the unfortunate circumstance that the priest's fingers come in contact with the mouth and/or saliva of the communicant he must immediately sanitize his fingers before continuing with the next in line.
- Reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice by the assembly is temporarily suspended. Accommodation should be made for low-gluten hosts to be available for those with gluten intolerance.
- The location of stations for the distribution of Holy Communion should be considered to facilitate orderly movement and to maintain proper physical distance. One-way traffic patterns are encouraged.
- Appropriate spacing between individuals in the Communion Procession is to be maintained.
- Holy Communion is not to be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand with gloves.
- When approaching the minister, the communicant is to pull their mask (*if wearing one*) below their chin. The minister, after saying, "Body of Christ," is to carefully place (drop) the host into the hand of the communicant avoiding any incidental contact. Communicants, after responding "Amen," reverently place the Eucharist in their mouth and replace their mask.

Parishioners are asked to contact their parish with any further questions or the Office of Worship 330-744-8451 ext. 282.